

# VanPool Winter Driving Tips

**Are You Ready for Winter Weather?** Weather patterns in the Puget Sound region are generally predictable. Winter here in the Northwest usually means roadways are wet and slick when it rains, snows or freezes. Being prepared for these conditions is the first step to a safe winter commute.

## Group Planning

- Monitor the weather reports. Don't be stuck unprepared when a snowstorm hits. [www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic)
- Designate who will drive if it snows. Some groups choose not to operate the van when it snows. Make sure you have enough trained backup drivers.
- Update or create a phone number tree for everyone in your vanpool so that calls can be made efficiently during any snow or other emergency.
- Plan alternate routes or pick up points for your van, especially if your route includes hills and back roads. Map a route that uses main arterial and well traveled roads.
- Make emergency carpool and/or bus arrangements ahead of time in case the van is late or doesn't go in. Will everyone carpool? Who will ride with whom? Will some people take the bus?
- Make sure every member of the group, no matter how infrequently the person rides, is aware of your snow plans.

## Vehicle Checks

- Always keep a full tank of gas. Never let the gas tank go below the half tank mark. This will help guard against fuel clogging and helps ensure that you won't be stuck in traffic with a low fuel tank.
- Create an emergency kit in your van. Sand or kitty litter helps aid traction under tires. The group may consider storing warm cloths, food and blankets in the van in case of delays on the road.
- Don't skip your daily or weekly inspections. Watch your anti-freeze level in the coolant reservoir.
- Keep your VanPool Service Representative informed if your van needs any specific attention such as brakes or heaters.
- Check for an accumulation of snow and slush in the wheel well and around the tire. Snow in the wheel well freezes and may hinder motion. Keeping the wheel well clear will also help when installing tire chains.
- Park the van on a level surface. When parking do not apply the emergency brake if it is very cold and snowy. The brake shoes will stick to the drums in freezing weather. Instead block the rear wheels.

## Driver Tips

- Be prepared to respond to a snowstorm. Listen to weather reports the night before, get up early enough to assess the snow levels and decide if the van will go in or if the group should make alternate plans.
- Leave early enough so you have time to react to road conditions, other drivers and to arrive at your destination safely.
- You know your commute. Avoid hills. Watch for black ice, especially on bridges and low or shady stretches of the roadway. Adjust your speed appropriately. Remember ice can be tricky. While snow provides some traction, ice gives you almost none.
- Warm up your van first before turning on your heat or defrost. Your heat and defrost will work faster.
- Start up slowly. Try not to spin the tires when starting. Snow melts and turns into slippery, icy slush.
- Keep weight on the rear of the van over the rear axle. Seat your riders strategically.
- Test your brakes to see how slippery the road conditions are, continue to do this during the route.
- Drive slowly and increase your following distance. Let up on the accelerator gradually and sooner than usual.
- In traffic, wait for the vehicle ahead to start up and pull away before you start. Watch how that vehicle reacts to the road conditions. Count to 3 or 4 before following. If the vehicle ahead is skidding or sliding, allow a much greater following distance.
- If you get stuck, use a traction aid, (chains, sand, salt, cloth) under the tires.
- Skidding when stopping indicates your speed is too fast for the road conditions. If you do start to skid, steer in the direction the rear of the van is sliding. Do not suddenly let up on the gas and brake cautiously, as these actions can make your skid worse.
- Slow down well before intersections so you don't have to brake in areas where the snow has been packed down to an icy glaze.

***Remember, if you feel the weather has created a condition too hazardous to drive in, you can use your alternate plan for getting to work that day.***

King County  
METRO  
**VANPOOL**

**For fast on-line weather updates and additional driving tips go to [www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic)**



**Remember, if you feel the weather has created a condition too hazardous to drive in, you can use your alternate plan for getting to work.**

## Emergency Procedures for Breakdown

Anytime a van breaks down it can be frustrating. When winter weather strikes, breakdowns have the added element of inclement weather conditions. Unfortunately winter conditions create a greater demand on all resources and this may cause a delay in responding to your situation. We will do everything we can to get you assistance as quickly as possible. We ask for your patience when adverse conditions exist as response times may be longer. We encourage you to follow the steps on the reverse page to help mitigate this challenge. Please review the quick reference of our Emergency Breakdown Procedures:

## Emergency Procedures

Protect the scene where your van is disabled and call a vanpool service representative during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.). If you don't know your representative's number or it is after hours, call **206-625-4500** or **1-800-427-8249** and the on-call staff member will be paged. You may call collect, but you must identify yourself as a vanpool driver for the call to be accepted. If you are calling from a telephone that does not accept return calls, please ask the answering service to patch you through to the on-call staff member. Be sure to have the following:

- Your vehicle HOV number, (for example HOV 1234)
- Your exact location
- Your van's condition and/or suspected problem
- A phone number where you can be reached.

For further information, see Section 3 of your VanPool Program Manual.

<b>Garages:</b>				
<b>Everett:</b>	Goodyear	7:30 am - 6 pm 8 am - 5 pm 10 am - 4pm	(M-F) (Sat) (Sun)	1502 1/2 S Everett Mall Way, 98208 425-355-8473
<b>North Seattle:</b>	Bill Pierre	7 am - 6 pm	(M-F)	11550 Lake City Way NE, 98125 206-367-7700
<b>Seattle:</b>	Goodyear	6:30 am - 7 pm 8 am - 6 pm	(M-F) (Sat)	1105 Stewart St, 98191 206-624-0984
	Budd & Co.,	7 am - 5 pm	(M-F)	800 Rainier Ave. S., 98144 206-324-0550
<b>Bellevue:</b>	Veolia	6 am - Midnight 8 am - 4 pm	(M-F) (Sat)	2000 118th Ave SE, 98004 425-637-9000
<b>Overlake:</b>	Goodyear	7 am - 6 pm 8 am - 5 pm	(M-F) (Sat)	14923 NE 20th St, 98007 425-747-9353
<b>Redmond:</b>	Goodyear	7 am - 7 pm 7 am - 6 pm	(M-F) (Sat)	16101 NE 87th St, Suite B, 98052 425-883-4006
<b>Renton:</b>	Mathewson's	8 am - 5 pm	(M-F)	271 Rainier Ave N, 98055 425-226-2965
<b>Federal Way:</b>	Sparks	8 am - 6 pm	(M-F)	32627 Pacific Hwy S, 98003 253-874-1070
<b>Kent:</b>	Veolia	3:30 am - Midnight 6 am - 2 pm	(M-F) (Sat)	7625 S 228th St, 98032 253-859-0549